Doing Hybrid Work Efficiently and Safely for BPOs

Hybrid work is here to stay in the Philippines. With the right technologies and solutions, you can implement hybrid work in your organization that promotes collaboration and transparency without compromising security.

'New Normal' in PH BPOs

Like most parts of the world, employees in the Philippines prefer hybrid work arrangements over on-site ones. Experts say hybrid work is now the 'new normal'[1]. What started out as an immediate and the most feasible solution to the drastic changes driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, hybrid work slowly evolved into becoming a necessity.

Hybrid work, in its operational sense, means mixing traditional office set-up with new ones. In today's case, it is combining on-site work with remote work arrangements. It puts emphasis on providing quality employee experience as it gives them flexibility regarding when, where and how to do get their jobs done.

Most business process outsourcing (BPO) firms in the Philippines are currently considering hybrid work to address multiple uncertainties and concerns arising from a post-pandemic setting[6]. In particular, to boost their road to business recovery and to respond to the growing number of BPO workers that want flexible working options[6].

In fact, the recent 2021 PhilCare Wellness Index survey conducted by PhilCare, one of the country's largest healthcare service providers, showed that 48.7% of employees prefer hybrid work arrangements[2].

On the other hand, only 35% were willing to go back to their cubicles and desks in office buildings. The remaining 16% wanted to work entirely from their own homes[2].

Doing Hybrid Work in PH: Cybersecurity as the Major Con

However, doing hybrid work is easier said than done.

Aside from the fact that it is a relatively new concept, keeping everyone on the same page can be quite a challenging task to overcome.

Furthermore, a scattered workforce can also be difficult for your IT department in managing and monitoring your organization's cyber defenses, especially in the Philippines where cyber threats remain rampant.
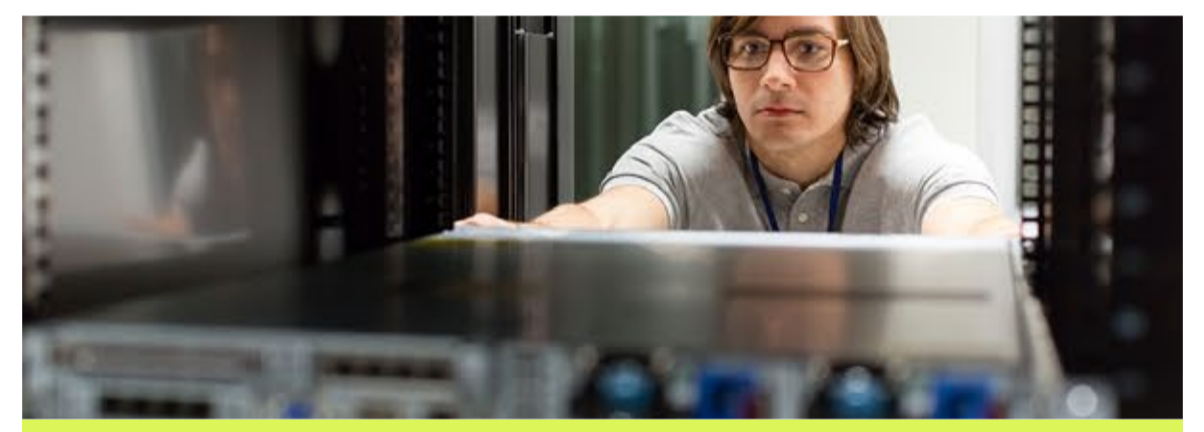
The Philippines has been constantly battling thousands of cyber-attacks as access to the internet widens. When COVID-19 lockdowns were introduced, the number of cyber threats grew by several folds.

Cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Security Network ranked the country as the fourth 'most -attacked' in the world for 2021, with over 50 million cyberattacks recorded. It was a 433% increase compared to the 9.4 million cyberattacks made in 2017[7].

Some of the factors that contributed to the skyrocketing number of cyber-attacks included the rapidly growing number of Filipino employees bringing work to their own homes[7].

With the lack, or absence, of advanced cyber security resources usually found in an office set up, workers are more exposed to dangers lurking on the internet when they work remotely.

Roughly 1 out of 2 small and medium sized-businesses (SMBs) in the Philippines do not have adequate cybersecurity solutions to detect or prevent cyber threats[8]. SMS are among the sectors most vulnerable to cyber-attacks in the Philippines[8].

Tips on Implementing Hybrid Work Effectively

An efficient hybrid work model should be able to promote collaboration, transparency and coordination and at the same time, keep your organization safe from cyber-attacks, even if most of your staff is on remote work.

To prevent misunderstanding, miscommunication and a decline in productivity, you should rethink, reinvent and revise existing work policies[3]. You can start doing so by asking for feedback from your own workers through informal surveys. These insights can help you arrive with more informed decisions.

When implementing hybrid work, you must also have sufficient cyber security tools and infrastructures in place before allowing employees to work anywhere[5].

You should invest in modern cybersecurity programs that have the abilities to detect, identify and prevent malicious threats entering into your company's digital ecosystem without putting additional workload for your IT team.

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